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LEARNING TO LIVE

by Julie Fiumano, MBA, BSN, RN

Death. No one wants to talk about it and yet none of us will escape it. When it happens to someone we know, most people don't know how to handle it. And, it's because people are uncomfortable about it and it's so final that people fear it the most.

In fact, there's only one thing that tops death on the list of things people fear most and that's public speaking. As a comedian once noted, most people would rather be in the coffin than give the eulogy!

The death of someone you love makes you aware of the fragility of life. It wakes you up and makes you question how well you are living. After all, no one wants to die feeling like they haven't yet lived.

You can choose how you live; you can worry about the future and what might happen to you, you can complain about how things aren't the way you want them to be, or you can live your best life right now, in this moment. By choosing to live life to the fullest and by protecting yourself and your assets for when the inevitable happens, the fear of death will lessen.

It was only a few months ago when I lost my dear friend to a sudden heart attack at 43 years old. It happened the way we all wish to go; my friend went to bed one night and never woke up.

And it's because I loved that I grieve. Without love and a strong connection to others, we wouldn't experience pain when they are gone. So in my sadness and grief, I am grateful, for I know that I loved and was loved.

From my experience, I've learned several important lessons about death...and life that I'd like to share with you. My hope is that you will choose to live your best life and, as a leader, you will share these tips with others both in your work and your personal life.

Life is happening right now. Experience the present moment. People who try to bargain with death often are people who have not truly lived. They've just been existing, and they beg for more time in order to do what they could have been doing all along.

If there is love, then there will be pain when it ends. And it's okay. It lets you know that you loved and there is nothing more joyful than love. Love anyway; it's worth the pain.

Experience all of your feelings—even the ones that you consider unpleasant. Feelings aren't really negative or bad; they just are. They are your inner messengers; they let you know you're alive.

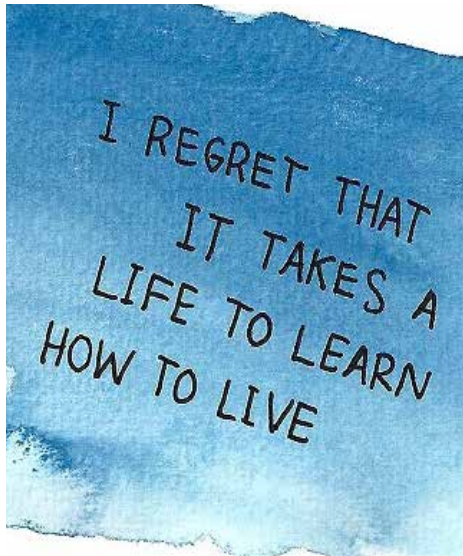
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LEARNING TO LIVE...

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It's what you do with your feelings that can be bad. When you feel a strong emotion, resist the temptation to explain your feelings or rationalize them away. Just pay attention and be with them. Accept your feelings as you experience them and try to understand what they are communicating to you. Don't hang onto them or hide from them; they will drain you if not addressed. People have trouble talking about death because of how they feel about their own life or death, or because they cannot handle negative feelings. When my friend died, people weren't quite sure how to handle their own feelings, and they didn't know how to deal with mine, so they avoided the subject or avoided me. But I needed to talk about it. I needed to fully experience my sad feelings and I needed to be given the space to explore how I felt about losing this person, about what this person meant to me, and about the void that now exists in my life. After any loss, people need the space to explore their new reality and you can support them by just giving them this space.

There are people who don't fear death; they fear life. Your life is a gift, an opportunity for you to experience this world and to make a difference while you're here.



Learn to enjoy yourself. Take responsibility for living your life well. Don't get comfortable with mediocrity; challenge yourself to be more, to experience more. If you don't know how, hire a coach. You don't need to do life alone.

Leave nothing left unsaid. The moment you experience the truth, share it. Tell people you love them...often. My grandmother used to say, "Never go to bed angry." That was her secret recipe for nearly 50 years of marital bliss. If you have something to say, say it now. About six months before my friend's death, I called and thanked this person for their love,

kindness, and support over the years. This person had made a huge impact in who I'd become and I needed my friend to know how grateful I was for the part they played in my personal development. When my friend died, I was so glad I hadn't waited to share that.

Create a Will. By having a Will, you clearly specify who gets what and it frees you from worry. You can relax knowing that when you're gone, your belongings and all you've worked for will pass on the way you intend.

Create a Living Will. This lets others know how to care for you if something should happen that renders you unable to decide for yourself.

Protect yourself with adequate life, health, disability, and long-term care insurance. With adequate protection, you leave nothing to chance, and you can relax knowing that you and your family are taken care of. It just makes sense.

Do what you love. On most days, if you find yourself miserable when you roll out of bed in the morning, choose to do something about it. Life is too short to be unhappy for long.

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How to Connect with Wings:

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NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

Spring forced its way into Wisconsin in an unusual way in April, 1993. It strangely marked the day with headline news. “Blizzard”. It was Easter-time...a time when the sun typically began warming the earth and tulips emerged. Outside my window a cherry tree with long, thin branches swayed in the wind. The branches loaded with spring buds supported dozens of plastic Easter eggs in bright colors suspended from ribbons. The sudden freezing rain and blizzard coated the branches heavily with ice causing them to strain and bend unbearably against the frozen weight. This bizarre scene mocked the event that had just unfolded...the death of our 21 year-old son, as the result of suicide. The kind of news every parent fears. We tried to shake the icy chill that numbed our minds and bodies. How could this be happening to us? How would we ever forget that day?

The next morning we awoke to sunlight reflecting off the crystallized branches creating prisms which otherwise might have seemed awesome. But to us, it was still a cold day—marked by death. We couldn't see beyond this chilling tragedy to vision anything possible in the beauty of early spring. Instead it seemed like endless nothingness without a future, without a reason, and without hope.

THE MEMORY OF A DARKEST MOMENT CAN CHANGE A LIFE

Spring! Isn't it the time of new beginnings? Doesn't it sing to us of evolution, newness, freshness, and beauty in all that nature can reveal? Isn't it the poetic symbol of hope? For Gary and me, it marked a time of hopelessness and sorrow that would create flashbacks to an unbelievable memory that created a super notch in the scrapbook of life.

Sometimes who we were meant to be is changed by a memory from our darkest moment. Memories triggered by traumatic events change the way we think, act and respond to future events. They can create either negative or positive reactions going forward. What we become tomorrow is molded by how we process the event when the numbness subsides. Our son's death, our darkest moment, became a turning point that changed who we were and created a life much different than we ever imagined.

We were naïve to the effects of death and grief of a significant loved one. The journey we were about to embark upon was incredibly strange. There were no rule books. The information highway lacked resources for the newly bereaved that weren't clinical in nature. Our paths lay before us in complete uncertainty. Looking back now, I am able to understand what helped us deal with the bad memories and create the positive mindset that transformed our lives.

- Acknowledge the memory
- Embrace the experience
- Measure the outcomes
- Move beyond it



Acknowledge the memory:

Those memories that either haunt or infatuate us may always be with us. Some trigger, such as a date, will cause the memory to re-surface and demand that we remember. Even though the memory may be unpleasant, it's very unlikely you can escape from it.

Since we couldn't escape it, we knew we had to deal with it. This occurs by determining what story, what message or what lesson the event brought into your life. Every memorable event makes a statement. Label the story, message, or lesson so you can measure its affect on you. The reoccurring memory may happen year after year...or until you've exhausted any possible reason to revisit the time in your life. Eventually, the negativity of the memory will become less demanding and you will be able to release it.

Every spring, Gary and I acknowledge the harsh reality of our darkest moment. We accept that Chad's suicide was a surprise and mystery to us, very much like the freak blizzard that occurred that April. We no longer need to dwell on what happened or why.

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DARKEST MOMENT...

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Instead, we acknowledge that it taught us how fragile life is. We take less for granted and focus on where we are now...not where we have been..

Embrace the experience

In grief, you are likely struggling with the aftermath of sorrow and many of its associated emotions. Real life creates pain and hurt.

It's inevitable. Accept that you cannot change what happened; and accept that it has now passed. You can't change all that you went through, but you can control how it will affect new experiences, relationships, and your future.

You are human; you hurt. Embrace your emotions momentarily; feel them; and then release them. Our emotions speak to our love for the person who died, and grief is a price we pay for that love when it is snatched from us. Understanding what you can and can't control paves the pathway to healing.

For many years, we struggled with the "what ifs", "shudda, wudda and cudda" scenarios. Eventually, we recognized that it was out of our control to change the event. We had two choices. We could either accept it and move on; or allow it to destroy both of our lives as a result. We chose living a life that allowed us the freedom to gain strength, faith, and courage from our experience.

Measure the outcomes

When you "let go" of pain and hurt, you become capable of seeing how this experience has changed who you are and what you can become. Letting go is not about "forgetting". It's about releasing the control the negative experience has over your life. If you allow yourself to sulk in your pain, you position yourself

for more failure and negative outcomes in other experiences.

Ask yourself. What did this experience mean to me? Even though I couldn't control it, it has a lesson— what do I want that lesson to be? Or what has that lesson already taught me about myself or life, in general?

We vowed to create awareness about grief because we didn't want others to go through the torment we did, initially. We shared our experience as we ourselves learned what to expect. Our mission was to live a purposeful life; and that became a ministry that grew. We could best honor Chad's life by helping others reposition themselves to live whole lives with new meaning again.

Move on

When you accept that you cannot change the past, or predict the future, you give yourself the freedom to transform who you are, for the greater good. Your future can be written by you. It doesn't mean you won't have other hurts in life, but it does mean that you will gain the confidence and power to give yourself control over your reactions to them. Be patient, this takes time. The way you felt when grief was new, is not the way you will feel forever. Accept that others can help you through the transition. Get support from a buddy, a group, an advisor or friend. Read. Attend classes. Learn all you can about grief to understand it.

We moved on, but not too fast. We took our time and allowed ourselves to grieve and learn along the way. For us, it was necessary to devote a lot of time to grief work to help us accept all the changes we would face. Moving on meant get-

ting involved. That's not for everyone. Moving on may mean just resuming life in the best possible "new normal" way. It's not important how you take the steps to move on, what's important is that you are willing to move on.

You will still always remember your darkest moments. Some trigger may bring the moment freshly back to you and may even cause renewed sadness and tears. It still happens to us, but we handle it better now. Our experiences with loss have jogged our spiritual and mental awareness in surprising ways. We can better understand some of the pain others are feeling, because of our own past pain. Our world is altered; our dreams have changed. But in some ways, we see life clearer now.

The budding cherry tree with the crystalized branches from the freezing spring rain sparkles again. We recognize that the prisms reflecting from the sunshine are a message that there will always be a miracle in spring. The ice will melt and thaw. The buds will burst forth with blossom. The sunshine will warm the chill; and nothing can stop the transformation, the inevitable awakening. The birth of hope. The birth of spring!



LEARNING TO LIVE...

Continued from page 2

**LIVE SIMPLY.
DREAM BIG.
BE GRATEFUL.
GIVE LOVE.
LAUGH LOTS.**

Identify the source of your angst and take action to change it. Choose to use up every ounce of potential that you were given. And discover, develop, and share your gifts with the world. Each one of us has a special gift. Do you know yours?

No regrets. Don't approach your death bed wishing you had or being sorrowful for not doing things that would have brought you joy. The elderly often speak about what they would do differently: take more risks, spend more time with loved ones, worry less, stress less, laugh more, love more. If there is something you want to do, go

for it. Don't wait. Tomorrow is not guaranteed.

So grab on with both hands and enjoy the ride. This is not a practice run. Do what you want to be doing. Be good to yourself. Stress less and remember that in the end, it doesn't really matter. What matters is how you live today!

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FIND NAN'S ARTICLES ON THE INTERNET

Wings feels honored that websites have chosen to share the articles Nan has written. Thank you for passing on our messages of hope. Here is this month's selection of a few you can find surfing the net or on our website: www.wingsgrief.org.

A Cause to Grieve Nan Zastrow, Vol. 5, #3

Sometimes We Don't Get Second Chances Nan Zastrow, Vol. V, #2

To Have or to Hold <http://blog.yourtribute.com/grief/to-have-or-to-hold-letting-go-of-rummage-and-grief/>

Chasing the Shadow of Grief <http://hopeforbereaved.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Oct13.pdf>

Just Keep Swimming Around, Nan Zastrow, Vol VII, #1

<https://centering.org/bookstores-and-conferences/newsroom.html/article/2017/03/07/just-keep-swimming-around>

Can a Horse Really Fly? Finding Hope, Vol. IV, #1

<https://thegriefftoolbox.com/article/can-horse-really-fly-possible-dream-lesson-hope>

ON A WING AND A PRAYER

Published in the Wings Magazine 1994

On April 14, 1971, Patrick, age 11, wrote a note and stuffed it in a bottle. He released the bottle in the river. And probably never gave it another thought. It's something almost any boy might do. But what makes this story amazing is the fact that the bottle survived for 25 years-Intact! And that it was returned to Patrick's parents, just like he asked in his note. When Patrick Brost, son of Myrna and Vernon Brost, died in 1979, he never knew that the message he placed in the bottle years earlier would mean so much to the family he left behind.

Time and the River by Nan Zastrow

An interview with the Vernon and Myrna Brost Family, Medford, Wisconsin

This particular location on the river was familiar to Patrick. It was behind his grandmother's house and a favorite spot for all seasons. It was here he fished with his friends. And explored the river with his brothers and sisters.

Pat was the second of the Brost's eight children. They talk about him and reminisce about him as though he is still coming in and out of the door. That's what has kept him so special in their hearts.

I could feel the joy that Pat's parents felt. And how amazed they were about this wonderful event that happened to them. Nearly 24 years have passed since Patrick wrote this message on a fine spring morning. But it brought back the feelings of yesterday. In mid May, this year the bottle was retrieved by Bradley Kmosena of Medford. Bradley's parents, Dave and Karen Kmosena, contacted the Brosts. The message dated April 14, 1971, asked the person who found the bottle to let him know where it was found, the date it was found, and the name of the finder. Pat listed his address so the "finder" knew how to contact him. At the bottom, he wrote: "Thank you for your kindness." The bottle was found about 2 weeks before Patrick's birth date of May. 22. He would have been 36 years old.



Gary (my husband) and I couldn't wait to visit with the Brosts when we heard about this story. On a warm summer evening, we sat on the patio with Pat's parent, Myrna and Vernon, and their daughter Kathy Messman. Here is their heart-warming story.

Tell us about Patrick. What was he like?

"He was different than the others (sibling)," his mother said. "He was shy and quiet in school. He was sharp in car mechanics. His dad was a mechanic too. He was a good car-fixer." They described him as well-liked in school and a joy to be around. "He was a good kid!"

"Patrick often played near the river with his cousins. They had Tonka trucks they would race in a big oval. They'd paint rocks and use those for trophies. During

the summer, the kids were there (by the river) everyday."

"Pat's younger brother, David, was his shadow. They used to watch Scooby Doo (cartoon) all the time. And we called his brother Scoob. Pat didn't like the name Patrick. We asked him once what he would like us to call him. He said 'Bob.' So we called Pat 'Bob'. He had two friends with the name Bob and we called them the 3 Bobs. Scoob is a lot like Pat."

"All the kids were close. Patrick's youngest brother and sister, Dennis and Jenny, are twins. They didn't get to know him much. They only remember him from the funeral. But they do remember that Pat and his girlfriend would take them for ice cream. The other memories are ones we've told them about.

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TIME AND THE RIVER

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Jenny and Dennis were 6 years old at the time. For the 20 years Pat was here, he was a great kid.”

We're anxious to hear your story. Tell us what happened.

“Bradley Kmosena (a resident of Medford) was fishing on the river. When he was walking along the other side, he saw a bottle lying on the bank. He picked it up and saw a letter rolled up inside. He couldn't get the top off the bottle. It was a screw top, aluminum and rusted shut. So he broke the bottle,” Kathy said.

Myrna showed me the thick piece from the green bottle that she has. It looked like a large quart bottle from soda pop.

“The bottle had washed up on the bank. Bradley said the bottle wasn't there the year before.” Myrna told us. “It's an area that floods often in the spring. Bradley didn't think it was any big deal, at the time. Bradley took the message home and showed his parents. His parents recognized the Brost name. They knew another brother (of Pat's), Mike. Bradley's father called Mike and told him about the bottle. Then he took it over to Mike where he works.”

“The message was rolled up with a rubber band around it. The band broke. It just disintegrated. But the note was bone-dry in

that bottle. Mike brought the note to us.” I looked at the note that Pat's mother has in a frame. Next to the note was a picture of a bright-eyed, eleven-year-old boy. Pieces of the note had fallen away. But the scrawled date and the message itself were well preserved despite the number of years.

“We are glad the date is on it. I'm so pleased that he (Bradley) didn't just throw it away. He could have. We talked about it later and said the bottle could have been in the Mississippi River by now. The Little Black River joins the Mississippi in the southern part of the state. The bottle traveled about 20-25 'river' miles downstream.”

“We never had a clue that Patrick put the note in a bottle. Even if we did, we would never have expected to find it after 24 years. We went to that spot near the river. Bradley showed us where he found the bottle and where he broke the bottle open to get the note. It felt good to be there.”

How did you feel when you heard about the bottle and the message?

“Oh!,” Myrna sighed, “I can't actually tell you. It was just such a . . . we laughed! We cried. It was such mixed emotions. At first it didn't seem like a big deal. The Medford Star News printed a short write-

up about it. And people started calling us. Kathy also contacted Channel 7 TV who aired the story.”

“People asked me: 'Do you believe in guardian angels?' And I said, 'I sure do! I really do!' (pause) It's like a message from the past. The bottle was found not too far from his best friend's house.”

What kind of message did you think this was? Does it have special meaning for you?

“Like Kathy said, he's here and he's still watching over us. It's a good omen, we thought. It's like he is telling us he's still around. Yes, it's a comforting feeling.”

“You know how hopeless and lost you feel when someone dies. To just all of a sudden have something like this happen. It's like he's here! It's been 16 years... 16 years (since pat died). But nothing's changed. You feel the same.”

That brings up something I wanted to ask you. Time goes quickly. How has your grief changed over the years?

“It get easier, but not better. You learn to handle it better.”

“It helps to talk about him,” Kathy said. “We talk about him all the time. We include him like he's still alive. That helps a lot.”

When we left the Brost family that evening, our hearts were a little lighter too. Their joy was contagious. Listening to them tell their story, we sensed their pride and love for Patrick. Myrna and I hugged and shared an unspoken thought from one mother to another who had lost their sons. Life was too short for our sons. But we are blessed by the time we had with them. Life is unpredictable...and so is the river.





There is
Spring
in
Heaven too!

Dear God, it's spring! Give me the strength to recognize its meaning.
Your harbingers of the season cautiously grace our presence.
Lo! I saw my first robin just a few days ago,
And that bush of pussy willows mysteriously awoke over night.
"Was it only yesterday that you claimed my loved one to join your celebration?"

Each spring:

When Thy mighty hand reaches down to perform its miracles, I'll remember.
When the dying grass turns from brown to thriving green, I'll remember.
When the barren branches burst forth with blossoms and later fruit, I'll remember.
When the frozen waters flow freely and ripple with delight, I'll remember.
When the hibernating creatures awake and trod the dry ground, I'll remember.
When the birds return with their cheerful songs and melodies,
I'll remember.
When the raindrops replenish the earth from its ravenous thirst,
I'll remember.
When the daffodils and tulips pop through the crusted ground,
I'll remember.
I'll remember, Lord God. Always! But especially every spring.
Your Plan for us is to witness the spiritual awakening and rebirth.
I'll remember that The Resurrection is the message of spring.
I'll remember that in Heaven, other family and my loved one wait for me.
And I'll remember that in Heaven, the celebration of spring is forever.

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Notification to our Facebook Friends

Wings-a Grief Education Ministry

now has a public group page on Facebook which is primarily for posting the quarterly ELetter, Education Events, Support Group dates, and public speaking events. We recommend you join this group for appropriate announcements to stay in touch. Additionally, our regular Wings-a Grief Education FB page continues.

Look for Wings-Grief Education Events & Eletter on Facebook—and join the group!

Would you like to share your story or poem?

If you would like to submit a short story, poem, or article, we welcome it. The material does not need to be original, but if it isn't, please include the author or credits that can be printed along with the material. We are looking for articles that inspire the bereaved, teach, and offer hope which is the focus of our ministry of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry. Poems or material may be submitted In memory of your special loved one.

Be Good to Yourself – A Care Tip



To everything there is a season . . .

Grieving is often compared to the four seasons. Each is unique. Spring reminds us of a time of healing and hope in the process of grief. Like the buds on the tree, new growth springs forth anxious to blossom. Birds return and sing new songs of hope.

Like spring, we are changed by grief. When we do our grief work, we transition from who we were to someone different than before. We grow. We blossom, In time, we sing new songs of hope.

If your grief is just beginning –and it is spring—you may not feel ready yet. Be assured that another spring will come. Your time to grow will come. The seasons are predictable. Healing from grief is predictable, if we diligently do our grief work.



“Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never the same.”

– C.C. Scott

Reader Feedback



WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHO WAS YOUR FRIEND IN GRIEF?

WILL SAY OR DO THE WRONG THING, SO THEY DO NOTHING AT ALL. THOSE WE EXPECT TO SUPPORT US MAY NOT KNOW HOW. AND SOMETIMES, AN ACQUAINTANCE STEPS UP AND DOES EVERYTHING RIGHT. WE'D LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR SPECIAL FRIEND (S) IN GRIEF AND HOW THEY WERE THERE WHEN YOU NEEDED THEM THE MOST.

DESCRIBE YOUR " FRIEND IN GRIEF". WHAT MADE HIM/HER SO SPECIAL? HOW DID HE/SHE COMPANION YOU WHEN YOU FELT GREAT SADNESS?

I think most of my friends in grief are others who have lost similar family members. My friends who have lost their parents or a child, have similar feelings and can understand my grief as I understand theirs. We all have that common thread, so we can relate to each other. It's also a feeling inside of us, I feel that my friends who haven't experienced what I have can't possibly understand my grief. I've even become friends with strangers who have had the same experience as I have losing their loved ones.

Terri, Schofield, WI

As a certified grief counselor and licensed therapist, I had to assure friends that my skills were of little use to me when my husband died, now 8 years ago this month. I was blessed with a husband who was kind, supportive, a friend, colleague, soulmate and who cherished me deeply as I cherished him. I also had/have a circle of friends who helped me when Bill died. Initially I had to figure out which "friends" were really ones who could be there in this loss. Once I did that I saw each one had a different gift and none, of course, could be Bill. None could fill that void, but each helped a bit. One friend called every morning for 3 months to see if I was up. Another helped me take care of his grave and my tears as we did that.

A couple just listen and that means the world to me. Another calls, even yet, if she does not hear from me for a couple of days. All of them ask me how I am doing with holidays, anniversaries and all of them create a sense of safety in that I can cry with them and vent or share memories. One of Bill's caregivers told me that he never knew Bill well before he got sick with Alzheimer's and would I sit some afternoon and tell me about him with stories and pictures. We did that for 3 hours one day. It meant so much. What I most appreciate from all of them is the non-judgment and acceptance of my grief. None tried to "fix" me, though a couple tried until I asked them not to do that. They were glad I told them. How grateful I am.

Mary, Madison, WI

My husband passed away suddenly, unexpectedly, June 19, 2005. I was out of town when he went into the hospital. When I got to the hospital, there was a little lady, Virgie, who was keeping her husband company while he was there too. She split up her time between her husband and mine since I wasn't there yet, getting him a coke, visiting with him. That meant so much to me. My husband died, her husband made it...for then.

All of our friends disappeared on me. I was shocked...not only did I lose my husband, but I lost all our friends too? I wouldn't have expected that. But there was a silver lining to this cloud, my friendship with Virgie deepened. She became my best friend.

We could talk about just about anything. Both of us were Baptist, but we both had open minds and we would discuss just about anything and everything. We would get together over a cappuccino and we could pour our hearts out to each other and know we were heard and understood. It was just a few years later that her husband passed away. We could talk about our grief openly with each other. We had common interests and would spend many an hour making cards together. We enjoyed going out to eat with each other or entertaining together.

Years later, Virgie remarried and moved out of state. I miss her tremendously, but am so happy for her because SHE is happy. I feel she was one of God's angels, sent to me when I most needed her.

Kay, Oakridge, OR

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WHAT DO YOU THINK...

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Friends who are widows at various stages of their journeys, longer than mine. It's a great support having others who "get it" and can walk along side. I'm finding I'm at a point now where I'm offering that support to others who are newer to the grief than I. And the benefits work both ways!

Marilyn, Neenah, WI

I immediately thought of my dear friend Dee. As I began my journey she came to the memorial service for David and gave me a loving hug. That was the beginning of her walk with me these last six months. Every few days she would send me text messages with a greeting for the day. As I spoke of tears and then sunshine she was the one who said, "Tears and sunshine make rainbows". How much that touched my aching soul.

On another time a beautiful picture came by email with a heart shaped ornament and the words "When we lose someone we love, we must learn NOT to live without them... BUT to live with the LOVE they left behind..." This introduced me to the site Healing Hugs.

When I was having a challenging day, I texted her and she made herself available to have a live conversation listening, understanding, supporting and caring. I can share my raw feelings with Dee and she is there without judgment only loving support. She is honest with me, helps me express my vulnerability, accepts me as I am and after I express my anguish we continue the conversation. We often end up laughing as there is humor, too, in my scattered thinking and erratic behaviors.

My "friend in grief" Dee is a gift to me and I have the comfort of knowing she

will continue being in my life as I work through these difficult times and beyond. I love and cherish her presence in my life.

Mary Ann, Wausau, WI

They were "there" and continued to be "there" thru the months and years that followed. They were very attuned to anniversary dates, holidays, and events that could stir up memories. They let me talk and talk and talk and get my feelings out without being judgmental or advice givers - amazing listeners. Journeyed alongside me quietly, consistently, patiently, and lovingly. I always knew they were there if I needed them. Their support made all the difference in my going forward. I am forever grateful for their love and support.

Nancy, Mosinee, WI



Who Is Really Your Friend in Grief?

A friend in grief is someone you can confide in and trust with your most sensitive feelings and thoughts and in return, expect confidentiality.

A friend is not judgmental and allows you to say what you need to say without trying to alter your expression of anger, fear, disappointment, or sadness. These are necessary emotions of grief that help you work through your loss.

A friend is willing to listen, sometimes just sharing the silence with you, and accepting your quiet space and your open tears.

A friend in grief encourages you to share your memories and talk about events in the life of your loved one.

A friend keeps in touch and spends time with you for as long as it takes.

A friend in grief will encourage you to reach out and explore your feelings and eventually create new dreams.

A friend in grief is there when others walk away.

Excerpt from the book Hitch Your Hope to a Star in an article titled "Walk Beside Me and be My Friend", Written by Nan Zastrow

Find *hope & healing* during your **GRIEF**

with one of these books by Nan

***Blessed Are They That Mourn* \$7.95**

Written from the heart, Nan tells her story about their real grief experience and how the sudden death of her 21 year-old son impacted her future and loss of dreams. She candidly shares her attempt to resurface from unbearable pain when community and friends couldn't understand why her grief should last so long.

***How a Fortune Cookie can Heal Grief* \$7.95**

Did you ever think that a fortune cookie could offer a profound message of comfort, happiness and peace in a life stressed by grief? Nan weaves a modern parable of life and teaches the value of attitude and choice in grief work. Discover what you might be missing. Read personal stories with results by people who used the Twelve Gifts of Hope-a project in grief work.

***Ask Me. 30 Things I Want You to Know* \$5.95**

All grievers want to be heard, but many suffer in silence. This books speaks to "30 Things" you will want to know about surviving grief (not just suicide grief). ASK ME teaches you what to expect and how to plan your response to uncomfortable situations. "When I am most vulnerable, here is what I want you to know," says Nan.

***Hitch Your Hope to a Star* \$7.95**

Here is a collection of stories about HOPE. Each shares its perspective through analogies and lessons learned during the journey through grief. Give this as a gift book to someone who is hurting, someone who has lost a special loved one, or to someone who could use reassurance that we are resilient individuals who survive the roller coaster experiences of life and grow from telling our stories.

***When the Holidays Hurt* \$7.95**

For nearly two decades, Nan, and her husband, Gary, have inspired the bereaved through community holiday programs for those who grieve. They offer ideas to preserve holiday sanity and sanctity based on their own experiences. Learn how to unwrap and add heart-warming, commemorative rituals into the holiday that honors and remembers your loved one who died. In this book is a collection of stories meant to inspire you and encourage you as you plan your first holidays after your loss.



Available at:

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

P.O. Box 1051
Wausau, WI 54402-1051

Web: Wingsgrief.org
Email: nanwings1@gmail.com
www.centering.org
amazon.com

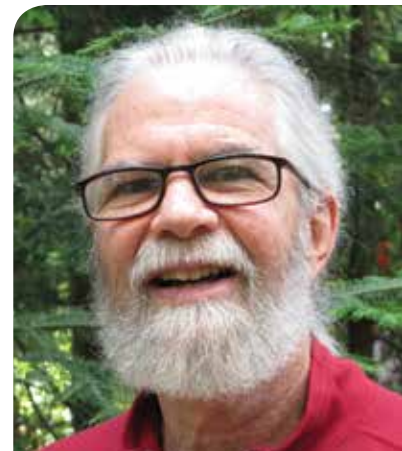
1-866-218-0101

Understanding Grief Spring Seminar 2018

Ben Wolfe, M.Ed., L.I.C.S.W., Fellow in Thanatology (Seminar Presenter)

Ben Wolfe is a grief, loss and trauma trainer and consultant. He served for 28 years as the founder, program manager and grief therapist for St. Mary's Medical Center's Grief Support Center in Duluth, Minnesota. Ben provided life-threatening illness and bereavement counseling for people from pre-school to senior citizens. He has given over 2,000 presentations at the regional, state, national and international levels, taught university graduate courses for over 25 years, and a course on life-threatening illness at the University of Minnesota, Duluth School of Medicine for 23 years.

Ben is former president of the international Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) and for 24 years served as chair of the 300 member Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support. In addition to chapters in books, he has authored numerous articles related to grief and loss and received numerous awards for his service.



SEMINAR ONE

Hanging On or Letting Go? Rebalancing Our World after Death or Loss

A community seminar for grieving families

Thursday, April 19, 2018 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Free of charge and open to the public

How do individuals and their families “rebalance their lives” after a loss, be it a death, traumatic event, or any crisis? And, how can one live with a “Yes I can” attitude...not only helping themselves, but in turn, also others. This program will provide strategies and interventions to help individuals, their families and friends trying to cope with the opportunities and struggles on the “loss journey,” and examine how individuals live their lives, *Hanging On or Letting Go?*

Both seminars will be held at:

Holiday Inn & Suites – Cedar Creek
1000 Imperial Avenue, Rothschild, WI

For more information or a program brochure contact:

Wings—a Grief Education Ministry
Nan or Gary Zastrow 715.845.4159 or nanwings1@gmail.com

Or Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services
Amy Kitsemel 715.847.2703

Professional CEU's available for both programs.

Presented by Wings™-a Grief Education Ministry who partners with Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services to provide these seminars as a community service. Other major sponsors include Brainard Funeral Home, Helke Funeral Home, and Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes & Crematory. For a complete list of sponsors, visit www.wingsgrief.org

SEMINAR TWO

Helping Individuals and Families Move from Coping and Surviving, to being Transformed and Thriving

A seminar for clergy, hospice, and others who care for the bereaved

Friday, April 20, 2018 | 9:00 am – Noon | Fee: \$50

Open to the public

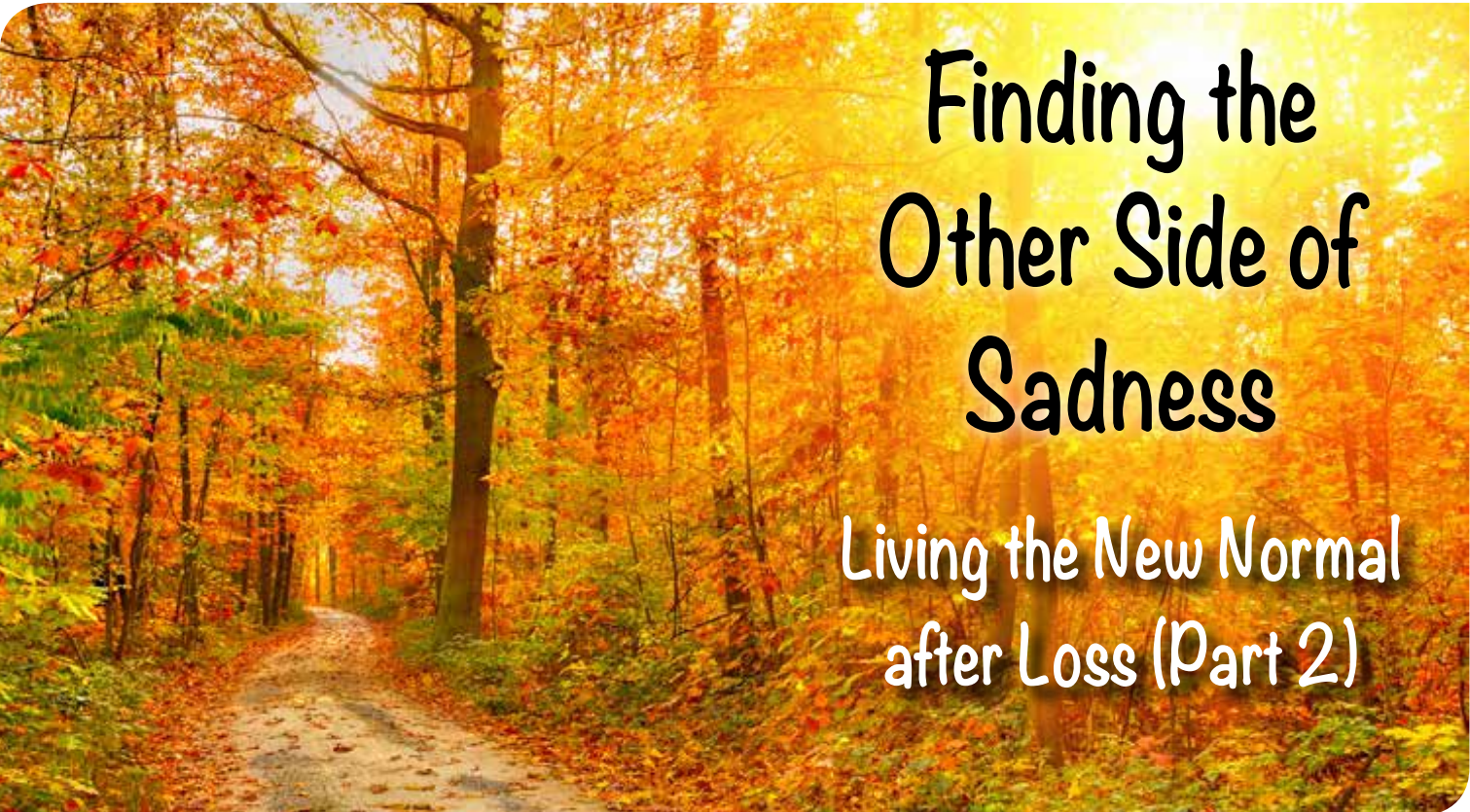
Situations concerning loss of any type, are a part of life and occur on a regular basis in the lives of individuals and their families. However, how is it that one can “grow” after a devastating and life-changing crisis or traumatic event? How can one in their “new normal” at some point see the world as still a bright place to live? And, what is the difference between persons who move from coping and surviving, to being transformed and thriving? This workshop will provide strategies and clinical interventions to help individuals and families trying to cope with the opportunities and struggles on the “loss journey.”

Presented by:



Partner sponsor:





Finding the Other Side of Sadness

Living the New Normal after Loss (Part 2)

In this series, learn how to get back to life when it seems that your grief may never heal. The secret is not about escaping the sorrow of grief, but it's about finding the way to accept life's challenges and prepare your mind for healing. In this four-week series, participants will be challenged to understand more about their loss, engage in grief work and build new identities. This group is designed for participants who are ready to discuss and share their path to healing.

DATES: Tuesdays, May 22, 29, and June 5, 12, 2018

TIME: 6:00–8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Aspirus Wausau Hospital.
Conference Room A-1, Quality Services Department,
Aspirus Wausau Hospital

COST: No charge. Group size is limited.
Register by calling 715.845.4159

FACILITATORS:
Nan and Gary Zastrow, Certified Grief Educators

Program Objectives:

1. What are the truths about a “new normal”?
2. How do I get “unstuck” from holding on to my grief?
3. How can I re-build my self esteem?
4. What are the signs that can tell me I've done my grief work?

Presented by:

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Sponsored by:


ASPIRUSTM
Passion for excellence.
Compassion for people.